

## CIS of Miami Site Coordinators: Doing Whatever It Takes Phillip

SOURCE Communities In Schools Miami  
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It was a typical morning at Homestead Senior High School and our Site Coordinator, known to students as “Ms. A”, had a brief moment in her office to check her emails before the troops of students would be coming through her door. The first email was another student referral from the school’s administration:

*Dear Ms. A, Please add Phillip to your case load. He just enrolled and it came to our attention from the district that he is homeless and has many needs.*

Ms. A began gathering information on Phillip. She learned that he was living in a small trailer with his mother, father, and two younger siblings. He was also in desperate need of eyeglasses since the ones he had were broken. As the school site coordinator, Ms. A’s job was to help Phillip with his circumstances so they didn’t become so overwhelming that he loses his focus on school and drops out. So Ms. A developed a plan to address Phillip’s most urgent needs, one by one.

First, she knew it was vital for Phillip to be able to see clearly and read while in school. She reached out to CIS of Miami’s resource partner that offered free vision screenings and glasses to students, but learned it would be at least two weeks before they could see him. Ms. A didn’t want Phillip to wait that long so she began contacting the optometrists in the area. Finally, one agreed to see Phillip.

Right after school, Ms. A took Phillip to see the optometrist. He received a comprehensive vision exam and left with a temporary pair of glasses, as well as receiving a new pair with a current prescription in two weeks free of charge. When Ms. A thanked the doctor for his services, he thanked her right back for bringing Phillip in to get his vision checked. “You did the right thing; he really needed it,” the optometrist said.

Driving home, Ms. A asked him about his day-to-day routine and what he felt were his biggest needs. He shared that all he wanted most was to work to earn money and lessen the burden on his family.

Back in her office, Ms. A reached out to her community partners again to find a job for Phillip as quickly as possible. She also asked the owner of her favorite restaurant if he was hiring. His answer was no, but Ms. A persisted; she explained to him how Phillip really needed the extra money and food for his family. The owner

saw the determination in her eyes, and said, "We'll try him as a dishwasher." The following Saturday, Phillip went to meet the owner and that very day became his first day of work.

This CIS of Miami student story illustrates the role of the site coordinator in doing what it takes to address and combat the devastating effects of poverty on young people, and to work in close partnership with the schools to ensure that the educational, emotional and physical needs of struggling students are being met.